the RED MAN in art

By Rena Neumann Coen, Ph.D. Designed by Vicki Hall.

Eastern Massachusetts
REGIONAL
Library System

EMR

Purchased with State Funds

HEADQUARTERS:
BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY
Copley Square

the RED MAN in art

Fine Art Books for Young People

AMERICAN HISTORY *in Art*
The BIRD *in Art*
The BLACK MAN *in Art*
The CAT *in Art*
CIRCUSES *and* FAIRS *in Art*
The CITY *in Art*
DEMONS *and* BEASTS *in Art*
FARMS *and* FARMERS *in Art*
The HORSE *in Art*
KINGS *and* QUEENS *in Art*
MEDICINE *in Art*
MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS *in Art*
POLITICS *in Art*
The RED MAN *in Art*
The SELF-PORTRAIT *in Art*
The SHIP *and the* SEA *in Art*
SPORTS *and* GAMES *in Art*
The WARRIOR *in Art*
The WORKER *in Art*
The OLD TESTAMENT *in Art*
The NEW TESTAMENT *in Art*

We specialize in producing quality books for young people. For a complete list please write

LERNER PUBLICATIONS COMPANY
241 First Avenue North, Minneapolis, Minnesota 55401

This book is printed on
paper containing recycled fiber.

the RED MAN in art

By Rena Neumann Coen, Ph.D. Designed by Vicki Hall ■ Lerner Publications Company, Minneapolis, Minn.

Copyright © 1972 by Lerner Publications Company. All rights reserved. International Standard Book Number: 0-8225-0171-6. Library of Congress Catalog Card Number: 72-267. Manufactured in the United States of America. Published simultaneously in Canada by J. M. Dent & Sons Ltd., Don Mills, Ontario.

Buffalo Hunt (1860) by Charles F. Wimar (1828-1862); collection of Washington University, St. Louis.

Contents

Introduction 6

INDIAN ART OF LONG AGO

Stone pipe from Moundville, Alabama 9

Seneca false face mask 10

Kwakiutl female figure 11

Haida rattle 12

Eight Galloping Horsemen, Cheyenne buffalo hide painting 13

HOW WHITE MEN SAW THE INDIANS

Indian Conjurer by John White 14

Tishcohan by Gustavus Hesselius 16

Lapowinsa by Gustavus Hesselius 16

The Death of Atala by Anne-Louis Girodet 19

Indian Widow by Joseph Wright 20

Penn's Treaty with the Indians by Benjamin West 23

Colonel Guy Johnson by Benjamin West 24

Joseph Brandt by Gilbert Stuart 27

The Last of the Mohicans by Thomas Cole 28

War Dance of the Sauk and Fox by Peter Rindisbacher 30

Inside of an Indian Tent by Peter Rindisbacher 32

Bison Dance of the Mandan Indians by Karl Bodmer 33

The Attack on Fort McKenzie by Karl Bodmer 34

Black Hawk and His Son by John Wesley Jarvis 35

Black Hawk by George Catlin 37

Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri and Pawnees by Charles Bird King 37

The Concealed Enemy by George Caleb Bingham 39

Bull Bear by Alfred Jacob Miller 40

Lacrosse Playing Among the Sioux by Seth Eastman 42

Indian Council by Seth Eastman 43

Medicine Man and Patient by Seth Eastman 45

Indians Traveling by Seth Eastman 46

Indian Burial by Seth Eastman 47

Buffalo Chase by George Catlin 48

Sioux Indians Pursuing a Stag by George Catlin 50

Arikara Village by George Catlin 51

Shirt worn by Four Bears 52

Four Bears by George Catlin 52

The Last of the Buffalo by Albert Bierstadt 54

The Story of Where the Sun Goes by Frederick Remington 55

The Cheyenne by Frederick Remington 57

The Trail of the Shod Horse by Frederick Remington 58

Indian Pipe Dance by Ralph Albert Blakelock 59

In the Wake of the Buffalo Runners by Charles Marion Russell 60

The Indian: The Dying Chief Contemplating the Progress of Civilization by Thomas Crawford 60

The Silence Broken by George de Forest Brush 63

Sioux Warriors by Oscar Howe 64

MODERN INDIAN ART

Hopi Corn Dance by Fred Kabotie 67

Wild Rice Harvest by Patrick Des Jarlait 68

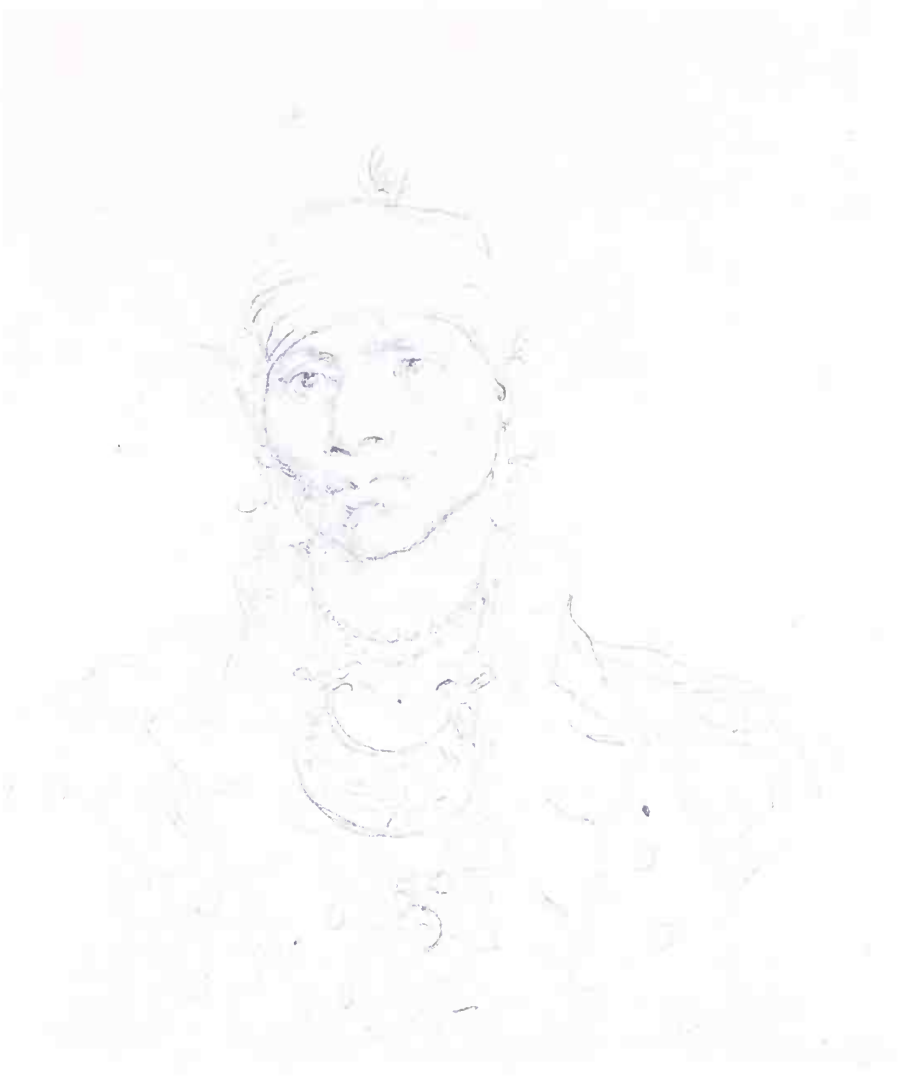
The Buffalo Hunt by Stephen Mopope 71

Introduction

Although little is known about the early history of the men who lived on the North American continent before the arrival of Europeans, we do know that some of them were artists. We have fragments of their tools, flints, and objects of polished bone which show us that these men carved and painted many of the things they used. The instinct for beauty was as strong among these people as among others, for all men admire pleasing, harmonious designs.

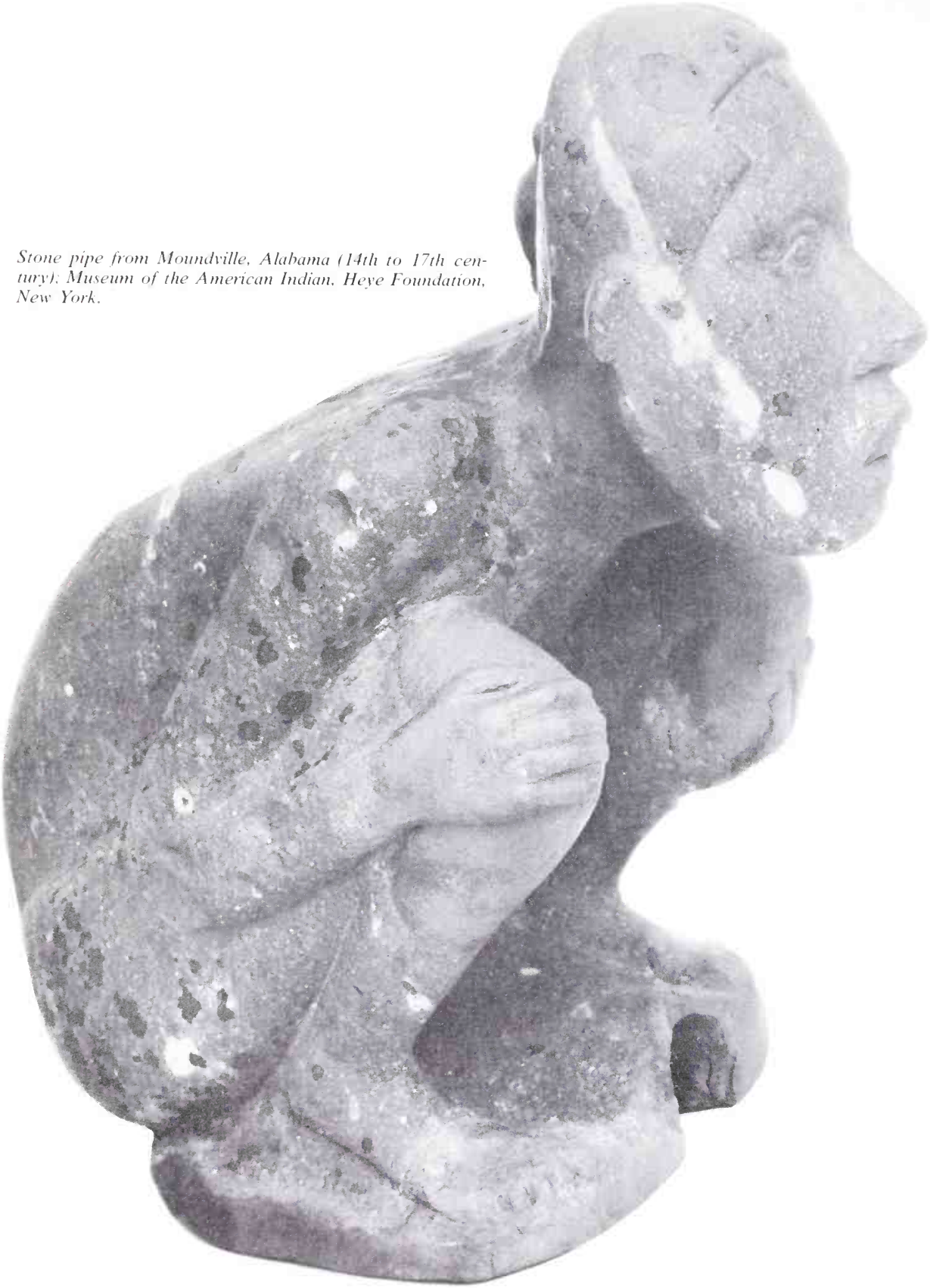
The original inhabitants of North America were called "Indians" because the Europeans who "discovered" America in the late 15th century thought that they had found a short-cut to India. They did not know they had found a whole continent that lay in the way. Later they realized their mistake, of course, but the name "Indian" stuck to the people who were the original and native Americans.

Even though the identification of the American Indians was soon corrected, many mistaken notions about them survived. There was little accurate knowledge about the red men in spite of the fact that interest in them was high. Because of this interest, and also because the Indians did not develop a realistic pictorial art until recently, it was through the art of the white man that the image of the Indian became known to Western civilization. The Indians did, occasionally, depict themselves, but usually as members of a group rather than as distinct individuals. Instead of realistic portraits, their cultures produced art that was primarily symbolic and tied to ceremonial and ritual purposes. Indian art achieved a sense of harmony and rhythmic strength, but it was so different from the more realistic art of the white man that he was all too slow in appreciating its power.



Hopothle Mico, an Indian chief (1790) by John Trumbull (1756-1843); Frick Art Reference Library, New York.

Because Indian artists so rarely portrayed themselves or their people, this book must deal mainly with the image of the North American Indian in the painting and sculpture of the white man. With a few important exceptions, it is only in fairly recent times that the Indian himself has appeared in Indian art as man rather than symbol. In our own century, as European and American artists turned away from subject painting toward abstract design, Indian art developed a pictorial quality that combines the old traditions of the Indian people with the new influences of the 20th century.



Stone pipe from Moundville, Alabama (14th to 17th century). Museum of the American Indian, Heye Foundation, New York.

Indian Art of Long Ago

The art of the many distinct groups of North American Indians was as different as their language and their way of life. However, we can say that, in general, American Indian art was symbolic rather than realistic. Art objects were often intended directly to serve religious and ceremonial purposes. But even the decorations of everyday objects often had significance. The Indians only rarely portrayed themselves as individuals, although from most ancient times human or human-like figures have appeared in their art.

One ancient culture which used the human figure in its art was located in the area now largely defined by the southern states of Alabama and Mississippi. Pipes carved from sandstone were the outstanding artistic achievement of this culture. The weight and size of these "Great Pipes" suggest that they were used for ceremonial purposes and not just for the casual smoking of tobacco. The bowls of the pipes were carved in designs that were related to a Death Cult, an important element in the religion of this area. Trophy heads, weeping eyes, rattlesnakes, and crouching human figures frequently appear. In the bowl of a pipe shown here, the sculptor was able to achieve a sense of power and rhythmic strength while reducing the human figure to a simple series of angles and curves. The planes of the face are also simplified and exaggerated in a way that emphasizes the intensity of the facial expression.

Seneca false face mask (late 19th or early 20th century); American Museum of Natural History, New York.

The Seneca Indians of the Iroquois Confederacy lived in what is now the northeastern part of the United States. As far back as the 17th century, they made fierce-looking wooden masks modeled on legendary characters. These highly colored masks were used in the ceremonies of the Secret Medicine Societies for the purpose of driving away evil spirits and curing disease. According to ancient tradition, there lived a strange creature with flaming eyes, a hideous mouth, and long flowing hair that covered his body. His voice was thought to be heard in a storm in the howling of the wind. Another tradition described bodiless spirits with ugly faces that floated above Indian villages sending disease among the people. These legends gave rise to the false-face masks, which were meant to be as fearsome as the evil spirits they were intended to drive away.

In order to give the masks great power, the Indians carved them on the trunks of living trees. Before the carving began, a three-day ceremony was held in which the Tree Spirit was asked its forgiveness for the mutilation about to take place. After the appropriate rituals were completed, the mask was roughly blocked out and cut away from the tree. The features were then carefully shaped in high relief and the entire mask was painted, red if the artist started carving before noon and black if the work began after noon. Finally, the eyes were ringed in metal, and long strands of horsehair, basswood, moosewood, or slippery elm were attached to the top of the mask.

Kwakiutl female figure (19th century). The Museum of Primitive Art, New York.

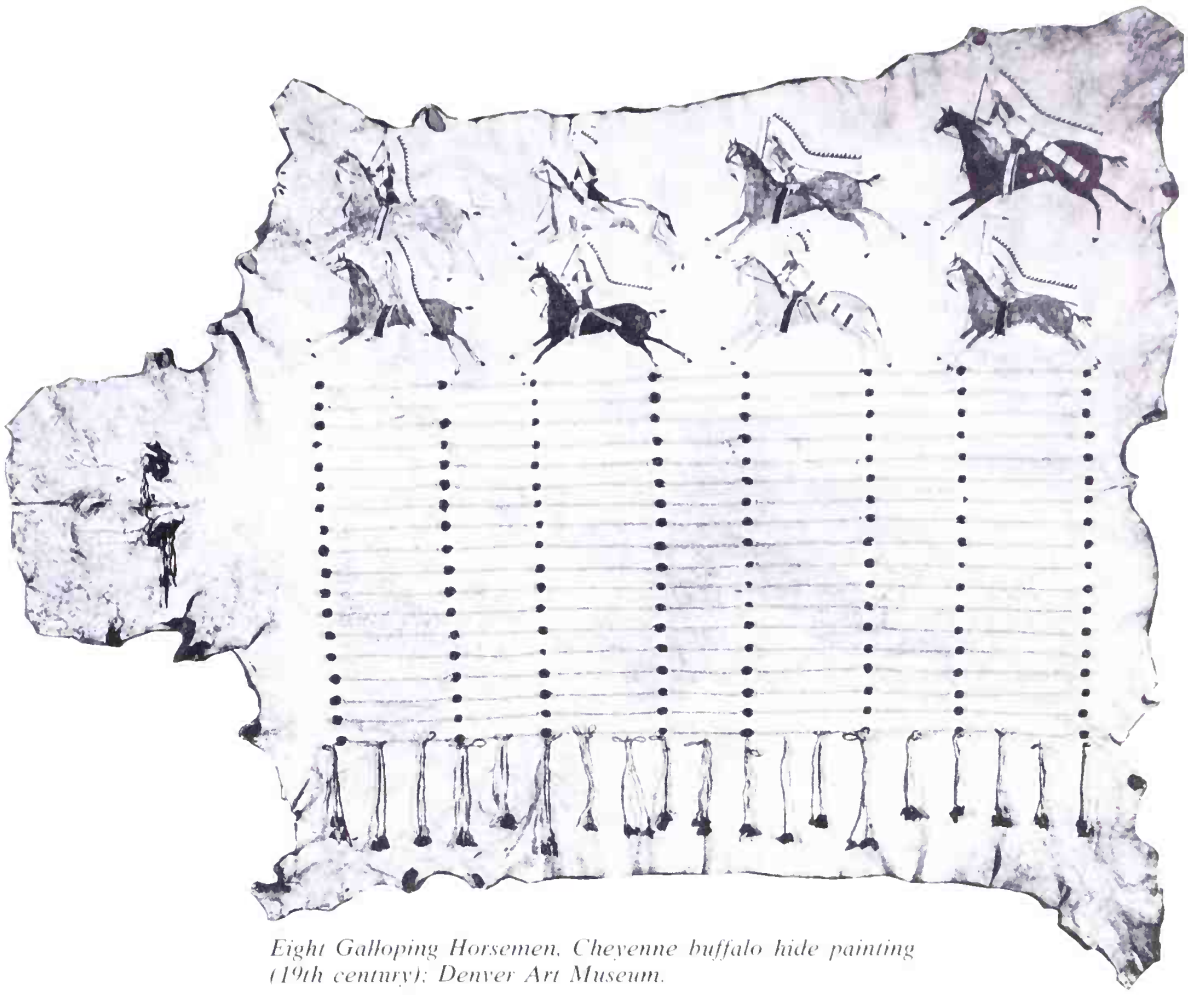
The art of the Indians of the Northwest Coast also served religious and ceremonial purposes. Much of it was associated with the magic of the shaman, or medicine man. Wood from the plentiful forests of the Northwest—cedar, spruce, alder, and Douglas fir—provided a rich supply of material for the wood sculptor. These sculptors, like the Seneca false-face carvers, respected the wood and understood that the grain itself was often the best guide for the form the finished work would assume.

The life-size female figure was carved by a sculptor of the Kwakiutl Indians. In this female figure, it is clear that the grain of the wood itself guided the hand of the sculptor. The contours of the figure are beautifully defined by the lines of the natural material. No other ornament or decoration is needed.

Equally simple and abstract is the Haida rattle shown here. Such rattles were the property of either tribal chiefs or shamans. The chiefs carried them as symbols of their power and authority, and during tribal councils they would shake them to emphasize important points in their formal speeches. Medicine men, or shamans, also shook them to accompany their ritual chants during the special ceremonies they conducted over a sick person to cure his illness.

Though the wood in this rattle is highly polished and very plain, the contours of the face and the features of eyes, nose, and mouth form a rich and highly stylized pattern of complementary angles and curves. The face reveals that its artist was capable of accurately observing nature. However, truth to nature was considered less important than the artist's feeling for rhythm and abstract design. A symbolic and expressive style is typical not only of the human shapes that appeared in Northwest Coast Indian carvings, but also of the many animal and bird designs that were characteristic of this region.

Haida rattle (19th century): Rijksmuseum voor Volkenunde, Leiden, Holland.



Eight Galloping Horsemen, Cheyenne buffalo hide painting (19th century); Denver Art Museum.

The Plains Indians prided themselves on their fierce courage and on success in battle. Honor was awarded to the man who killed or wounded the greatest number of the enemy. In time, successful combat in war became ritualized to such an extent that touching an enemy, referred to by the French word *coup*, meaning blow, was considered better than destroying him. The number of coups a warrior could count was boasted of, mentioned in formal contests, and painted symbolically on tepee linings and on the buffalo robes that were worn on ceremonial occasions. Such buffalo robe paintings appear in several drawings by Karl Bodmer, a well-known painter of the Plains Indians. They were also described by another artist, George Catlin, who was particularly impressed by the buffalo hide paintings of Mato-tope (Four Bears), a medicine man of the Mandan tribe.

The buffalo robe painting shown here was done by an anonymous Plains Indian artist some time in the 19th century. It records eight successful coups, represented by two rows of four galloping horsemen. The horses resemble toys rather than real animals, and the riders themselves, all shown in profile, seem frozen forever on the buffalo robe. The decorative lines beneath the horsemen are made of porcupine quills; deer toes dangle from the ends of the tassles. In keeping with the symbolic purpose of the picture, the drawing is flat with no indications of light and shade. In a formal, stylized rhythm, the figures seem to gallop across an eternal space in pursuit of an eternal enemy.

How White Men Saw the Indians

No artist sailed with Columbus, but very soon after Europeans had discovered the Americas, European artists began to make drawings and paintings of the new land and its inhabitants.

Among the earliest, although not the first, to portray the North American Indian was an Englishman by the name of John White. The artist was also a statesman, a map-maker, and a mathematician. In 1587 and again in 1590, White was governor of the Roanoke Colony established by Sir Walter Raleigh on an island off the coast of North Carolina. During one of White's absences from the colony, it mysteriously disappeared and none of its settlers was ever seen or heard from again.

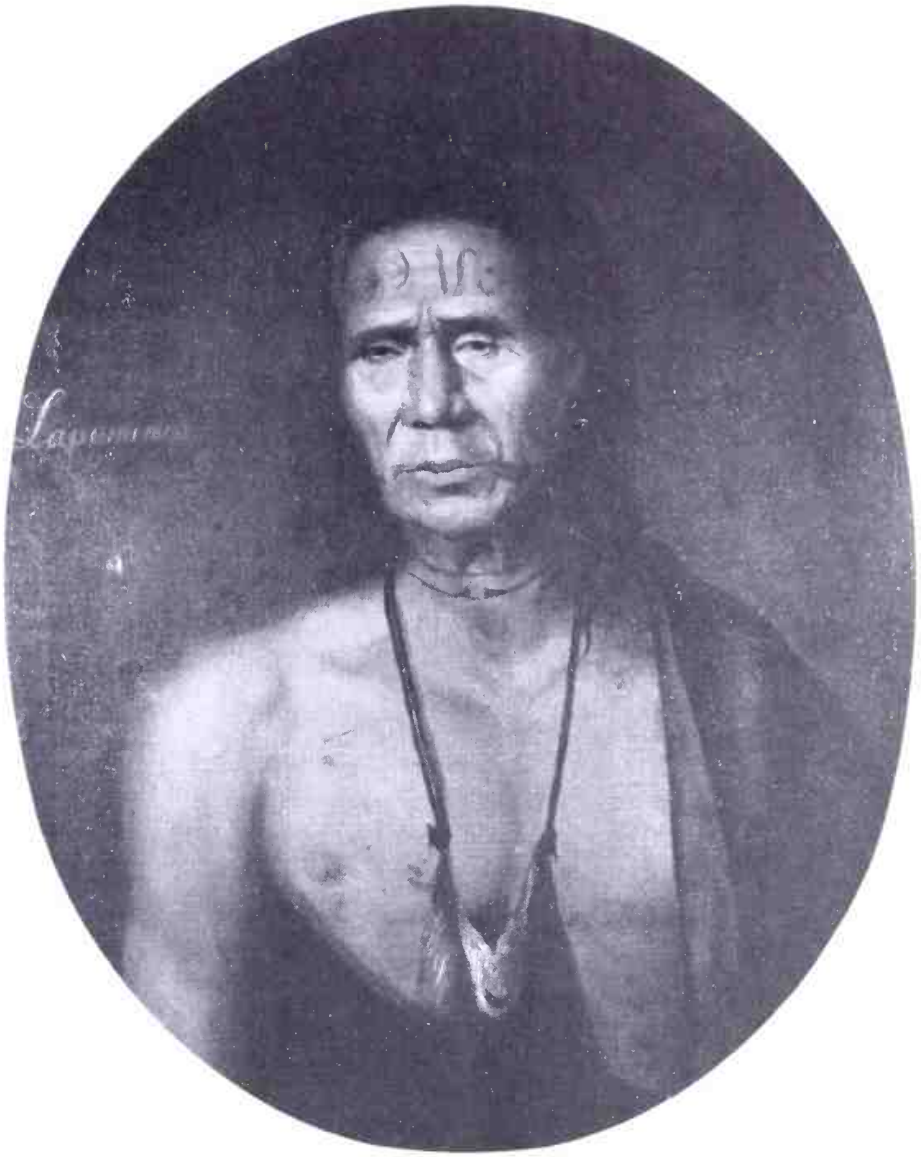
White's line drawing, *Indian Conjurer,* marks the first appearance of the medicine man in Western art. The sprightly, dancing figure moves in time to an unheard drum beat. The artist gives us a vivid idea of the ritual dances that were often part of the ceremonies conducted by medicine men.

However, White's representations of Indians are not accurate as realistic portraits. The figure here looks more like an ancient Greek or Roman sculpture than a real Indian medicine man. Classic works of art served as models for many painters who portrayed the American Indians. By using such respected models from antiquity, these artists hoped to emphasize the importance of their Indian subjects.

Indian Conjurer (about 1585) by John White (16th century); British Museum, London.

It wasn't until 150 years after White's drawing, *Indian Conjurer*, that the first true portraits of individual Indians appeared. They were painted in 1735 for John Penn, the Proprietor, or colonial governor, of Pennsylvania. The artist was Gustavus Hesselius, a Swedish-born artist who practiced his craft in the Middle Atlantic colonies of Pennsylvania, Delaware, and Maryland. The portraits are of Tishcohan (He-Who-Never-Blackens-Himself) and Lapowinsa (Going-Away-To-Gather-Food), two chiefs of the Delaware Indians. These men were tricked into signing the "Walking Purchase," a 1737 treaty which granted to the white man an area of land as far as a man could walk in a day and a half. The treaty provided the opportunity for one

Tishcohan (1735) by Gustavus Hesselius (1682-1755); The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.



Lapowinsa (1735) by Gustavus Hesselius (1682-1755): The Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

of the white man's many hundreds of unjust land grabs. The governor of Pennsylvania had a road built and hired a trained runner to go the distance.

The two Indian leaders are painted with careful realism. We see ceremonial paint on their faces and the chipmunk skin pouches resting on their chests. (One of the pouches holds a clay pipe.) The artist has also vividly captured the Indians' look of being puzzled and hopeless. They had been caught in the pressure created by two different civilizations that made little attempt to understand one another. Tishcohan and Lapowinsa are shown as the leaders of a dying race, facing their situation with dignity and sad resignation.

The Death of Atala (1808) by Anne-Louis Girodet (1767-1824); Louvre, Paris; Photographie Giraudon.

One of the strangest representations of the American Indian is the painting *The Death of Atala* by Anne-Louis Girodet. This painting illustrates a long, romantic, and very popular story about America and its native inhabitants. It was written in 1801 by François René de Chateaubriand, a French nobleman who had traveled to the New World in 1771, in search of the legendary Northwest Passage. Chateaubriand's story, written in the form of an epic poem, records some of the mythical notions about America and her native inhabitants which were still held at the beginning of the 19th century.

In the painting, Chactas, a young Indian who had converted to Christianity, mourns his dead bride, Atala. A hooded and bearded hermit solemnly helps support the body of the dead girl. The figures are in a tomb, a dark grotto lit by a dramatic light entering the cave through the large boulders forming its entrance. These boulders are arranged to form a roughly shaped pointed arch, which suggests the stone architecture of the Medieval Gothic church and the symbolism of Christianity. The cross rising above the distant forest also reminds us of Christianity. Even the three figures inside the grotto suggest the Christian theme of the entombment of Christ. Girodet, in this painting, interprets the Indians of the New World (whom he had never seen himself) in a romantic, imaginary, and purely Christian way.

Joseph Wright of Derby, England, also painted American Indians without having ever seen one himself. His *Indian Widow*, painted in 1785, is an equally romantic and even earlier image of the Indian than Girodet's. It attempts, however, to represent something of real Indian life and customs. The picture shows us a young Indian widow mourning her dead husband under a tree on which his military trophies hang. According to the custom of some tribes, at the first full moon after the death of a chief, his wife was expected to expose herself to the elements for one full day in order to pay proper respect to the memory of her dead husband. Wright depicts this scene with dramatic stage props intended to emphasize the courage and devotion of the grieving young wife. The fury of a violent storm and even the eruption of a distant volcano fail to move the Indian widow from her solitary vigil.

However, like Chactas in Girodet's painting, Wright's Indian woman more closely resembles an ancient statue than an American Indian.

Indian Widow (1785) by Joseph Wright (1756-1793); Derby Museum and Art Gallery, England.

Penn's Treaty with the Indians (1771) by Benjamin West (1738-1820); Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia.

Benjamin West, a Pennsylvania native, was the first American-born artist to achieve an international reputation. While he was still a young man, he left America to live in England. He became rich and famous there and never returned to his native land.

West's painting *Penn's Treaty with the Indians* illustrates an important event in the early history of colonial Pennsylvania. It was actually painted in England in 1771, and West had to depend on his childhood memories for the appearance of the Delaware Indians of western Pennsylvania. It is interesting that he painted them as a curious mixture of native Delawares and ancient statues. Like other painters of his time, West painted Indians in a style that resembled classical sculpture. He felt this gave them the same qualities of nobility, dignity, and courage believed to have been typical of the gods and heroes of ancient Greece and Rome. The Indians' robes, feathered headdresses, and beaded garments are probably accurate enough. These costumes make a picturesque contrast to the plain and sober clothing of the Pennsylvania Quakers trading with the Indians. The Indians are more consciously "posed," however. The Indian mother and daughter at the lower right look especially like sculptured figures decorating ancient Greek temples. But West nevertheless remembered to include a baby strapped into an authentic Indian cradle board.

Colonel Guy Johnson (1776) by Benjamin West (1738-1820): Andrew Mellon Collection, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

The portrait of Colonel Guy Johnson was also painted by Benjamin West. Colonel Johnson was a British colonel assigned to Indian affairs in America. He is dressed in the red coat of an English soldier, but also wears Indian beaded moccasins and holds an Indian blanket and Indian headdress. Behind him stands Joseph Brandt, a Mohawk chief who accompanied Colonel Johnson on a visit to England in 1775 or 1776. Joseph Brandt, whose Indian name was Thayendanegea, was a member of the Canajoharie tribe of the Mohawks and a leader of the Iroquois Confederacy of six Indian nations. He fought with the British during the American War of Independence. He also visited England twice in an effort to get compensation for the Iroquois for losses they had suffered during the war. West apparently painted this double portrait during Brandt's first visit to England. He must have welcomed the opportunity to paint the Mohawk leader, for although he places Brandt in the shadows behind the British soldier, the Indian bears himself with pride and dignity.

The Mohawk seems to represent the hero of the North American woodlands, the "noble savage" whom the romantic imagination of the time identified with the heroes of the ancient past. There is also a reverse twist to the attitude expressed in this painting. Some years earlier, when on a visit to Rome, West had been taken to see a famous statue of a Greek god, known as the *Apollo Belvedere*. "My God," West is supposed to have exclaimed. "How like it is to a Mohawk warrior!"

Joseph Brandt (1786) by Gilbert Stuart (1755-1828); New York State Historical Society, Cooperstown.

Joseph Brandt, or Thayendanegea, was also painted by Gilbert Stuart, another 18th-century American artist. Stuart was born in Newport, Rhode Island, where he began to paint. He also studied in Edinburgh, Scotland, and in London, England, where he established a successful career as a portrait painter. Debts he could not pay drove him to Ireland, however, in order to escape debtor's prison. From there he went back to America, fired with the ambition of painting the heroes of the American Revolution. He is well known for his many portraits of George Washington.

Stuart's portrait of Joseph Brandt was painted with the artist's usual flash and brilliance. Just the head and shoulders of the figure show against a light-filled, airy space. The artist created a vivid impression of light, color, and texture by using a quick and sketchy stroke and a brush laden with pigment. The light and lively way the paint itself was applied suggests the vitality and energy of the young Mohawk chief.

In the early years of the 19th century, the novels of James Fenimore Cooper were very popular. His *Leatherstocking Tales* were adventure stories about pioneers, scouts, and Indians. They were widely read not only in America but also in Europe, where they were translated into several different languages.

Thomas Cole, an English-born New York artist, used one of Cooper's most exciting adventure stories as an excuse for painting a dramatic version of a wilderness scene. The painting of a scene from Cooper's novel *The Last of the Mohicans* shows the climactic moment when Cora, the heroine, is threatened by a Huron chief. In the nick of time, she is daringly rescued by Uncas, a young Mohican chief, the last of his tribe. He leaps from a fearful height to the other figures grouped in a circle on a rocky ledge of the mountains. They are dwarfed by the towering crags and precipices that surround them. A sudden dramatic shaft of light breaks through the clouds and illuminates the scene. This kind of glorification of the wilderness—of nature untamed by civilization—was typical of the romantic landscapes of the 19th century. It was especially typical of the so-called Hudson River School, which was not really a school of art but a group of painters devoted to the great out-of-doors.

The Last of the Mohicans (1827) by Thomas Cole (1801-1848). Wadsworth Atheneum, Hartford, Connecticut.

War Dance of the Sauk and Fox was one of the earliest paintings to illustrate the customs of western tribes. It was done by Peter Rindisbacher, a Swiss-born artist. In 1821, at the age of 15, Rindisbacher immigrated with his family to a pioneer settlement on the Red River in Canada, near present-day Winnipeg. Five years later, ruined by disastrous floods and faced with starvation, the family moved again.

War Dance of the Sauk and Fox (about 1820) by Peter Rindisbacher (1806-1834); West Point Museum, United States Military Academy.

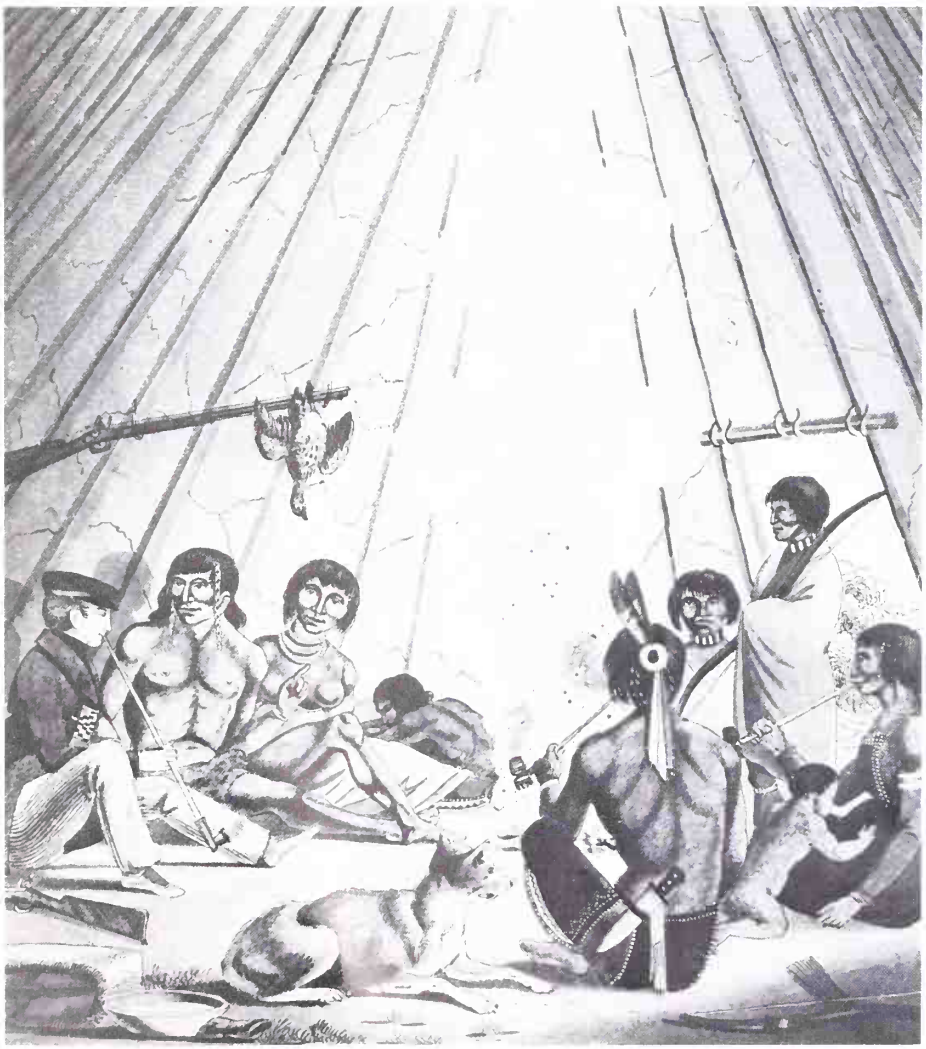
After some months at Fort Snelling, Minnesota, they settled in Prairie-du-Chien, Wisconsin, a primitive military outpost on what was then the western frontier. Even as a boy, Peter Rindisbacher found a ready market for his sketches and watercolors and was able to add to his family's meager income. When he moved to St. Louis in 1829, he already had an established reputation as a painter of Indian life.

Rindisbacher's painting of the *War Dance of the Sauk and Fox* is lively and colorful. The artist painted the Indians, however, as though they were European men decked out in war paint, breech cloths, and feathers. The physical differences between red men and white men were ignored in most 19th-century representations of red men, for the white artists who painted them saw the Indians largely through their own imaginations.

A cozier and more domestic scene is shown in another Rindisbacher painting, *Inside of an Indian Tent*. The young artist himself smokes a long-stemmed pipe in the company of a group of Indians who are gathered around an open fire. The fire lights up the inside of the tent and creates a feeling of warmth and friendship. A pheasant, soon to be eaten for dinner, hangs on a long-barreled gun. (In 1824, when this painting was done, guns were replacing traditional Indian weapons such as the bow and arrow.) A dog lying in the foreground completes this peaceful scene. As well as being hunters and beasts of burden, dogs were popular domestic pets in Indian villages.

Rindisbacher was a largely self-taught artist. His drawing seems labored as though he worked hard at it. Also he emphasized all the details of his subject, instead of focusing on the most important elements as a more sophisticated artist would have done. Nevertheless, his sketches and watercolors give us a glimpse of some of the details of Indian life in the early part of the 19th century.

Inside of an Indian Tent (1824) by Peter Rindisbacher (1806-1834); Peabody Museum, Harvard University.



Bison Dance of the Mandan Indians (1834) by Karl Bodmer (1809-1893); courtesy of Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, Germany.

Another lively depiction of an Indian dance is Karl Bodmer's *Bison Dance of the Mandan Indians*. Bodmer, like Peter Rindisbacher, was a Swiss-born artist, but unlike the earlier painter he received a good art education in Paris. He came to America in 1833 as the illustrator for an exploring expedition led by Maximilian of Wied-Neuwied, a German prince with a taste for adventure and excitement. Maximilian's party traveled as far west as present day Montana, and Bodmer worked on a large number of drawings and paintings along the way. His masterpiece from that collection is undoubtedly *Bison Dance of the Mandan Indians*, painted near Fort Clark in 1834. The original painting has been lost, and we know it today only from engraved copies.

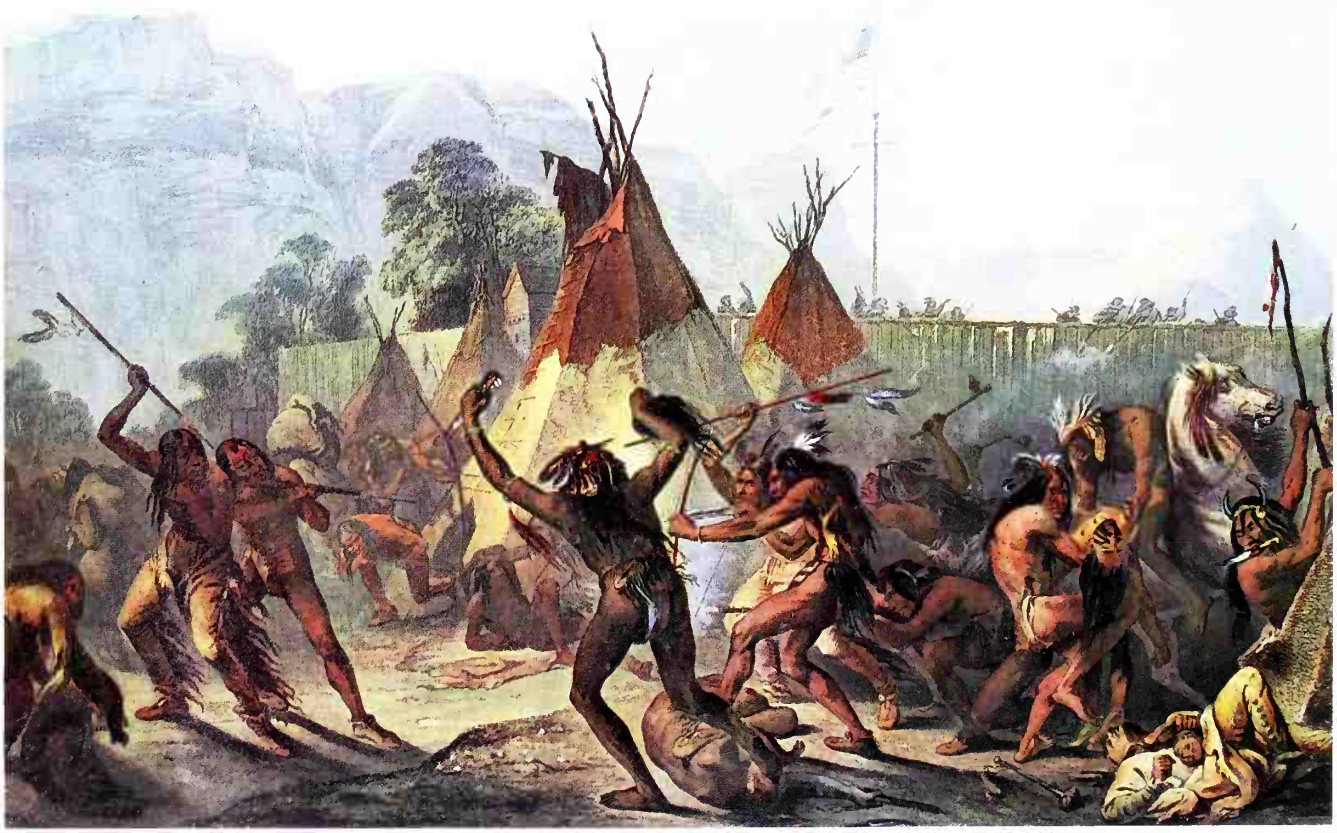
In the picture the main dancer is the Mandan medicine man, Mato-tope (Four Bears). In spite of the fact that Mato-tope is hidden behind his bison mask and buffalo hide shield, we nevertheless feel his presence as a real person. His entire figure expresses the fierceness that the dance required. The other Indians who participate in the dance are equally vivid as they rattle and shake their way across the surface of the picture. A few years after this picture was painted, the Mandan Indians were almost completely destroyed by an epidemic of smallpox, a disease which was unknown among them before the arrival of the white man.

Karl Bodmer's *The Attack on Fort McKenzie* also survives only in engraved copies. It describes a battle Bodmer himself saw on August 28, 1833, between a large attacking force of Assiniboin and Cree Indians and a band of the Blackfoot tribe. The settlers in the fort rallied to the aid of the Blackfoot Indians, who had been encamped around the fort. The Assiniboins and Crees were driven off.

The picture is full of the action and explosive energy of battle, but the picture space itself is rather shallow. The observer's eye is effectively stopped by the wall of the fort in the background. The figures weave across the narrow foreground area as though the artist remembered them as actors in a particularly exciting staged melodrama. The rearing horse at the right, whinnying in pain and fright, seems to emphasize the noise of the brief, violent battle.

Bodmer was among the first of a number of 19th-century painters who traveled west to portray red men and record their ways of life. American artists who stayed in the cities of the East, however, also sketched the Indians.

The Attack on Fort McKenzie (1833) by Karl Bodmer (1809-1893); courtesy of Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, Stuttgart, Germany.



Black Hawk and His Son (1833) by John Wesley Jarvis (1780-1893); Thomas Gilcrease Institute of American History and Art, Tulsa, Oklahoma.

Black Hawk and his Son was the work of John Wesley Jarvis, an artist well known early in the 19th century as a fashionable portrait painter of the ladies and gentlemen of New York society. Black Hawk and his son may be the only Indians whose portraits he ever painted. Black Hawk was the chief of the Sauk and Fox tribes who led his people in a skirmish known as the Black Hawk War. It was one of the red man's unsuccessful stands against the white man's gradual take-over of Indian lands and the westward push of white civilization.

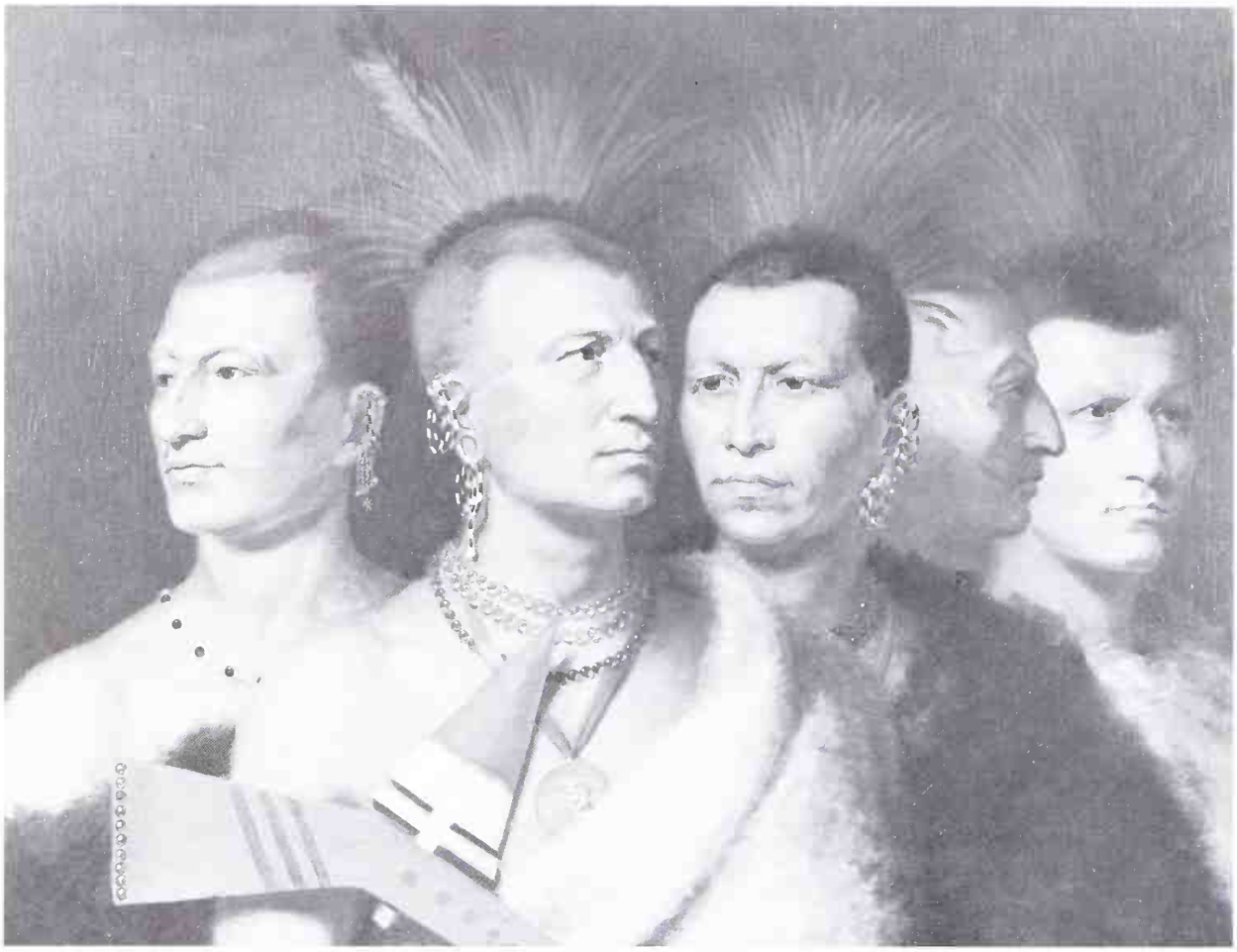
The artist's fluid brush vividly portrays the fine noble head of the Indian patriarch and of his son. The Indian patriot looks proudly out at the white man's world, which had conquered but not defeated him. Although his son, who greatly resembles him, wears Indian dress, Black Hawk himself is clothed in the contemporary costume of white civilization. Following the custom of his people, however, the chief wears Indian bead decorations on the rims of his ears.

Jarvis must have seen the chief and his son in the spring of 1833 when Black Hawk and some of his followers were taken from their home in the Midwest on a tour of the eastern cities. They were being exhibited as prisoners of war, but even this sideshow tour did not diminish the dignity of the old chief. He turned it into a personal triumph, winning the admiration of all who came to see him. Proud and defiant to the end, he refused to acknowledge the white man's right to stolen Indian lands.

Black Hawk (1832) by George Catlin (1796-1872); National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

It is interesting to compare the Jarvis portrait with one of Black Hawk done a year earlier by George Catlin, the best known of all American painters of the Indian. Catlin did travel west to study the red man. His painting of Black Hawk was done in 1832 during the artist's first trip up the Missouri River. The Indian is shown half-length, wearing a fringed leather shirt and rows of beads —the same bead decorations which appear a year later in Jarvis' portrait. Except for a scalp lock, the Chief's head is clean-shaven. He carries a medicine bag made out of the skin of a black hawk and a fan made out of its feathery tail. Catlin's painting is quick and sketchy, but it too gives us a vivid picture of the Indian chief who led his people against the white man. However, Catlin's chief interest in his portrait of Black Hawk was in the Indian's costume and tribal ornaments. Jarvis' portrait, on the other hand, probes much deeper into the human personality of the proud Sauk chief. It shows him not as an Indian but as a man.

A group of Indian braves, *Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri and Pawnees*, were painted in Washington, D.C., in 1821 by gentleman-artist Charles Bird King. King, born in Newport, Rhode Island, studied for a short time in New York City and then had the benefit of some years of study under Benjamin West in London. Eventually he settled in Washington, D.C. Although he never traveled west, as so many painters of Indians did, he made a career of painting the red men who came to the nation's capital.



Young Omahaw, War Eagle, Little Missouri and Pawnees (1821) by Charles Bird King (1785-1862). National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

King's richly painted canvases of important leaders of the Kansa, Pawnee, Omaha, and other Plains tribes formed the nucleus of the National Indian Portrait Gallery. This collection was eventually acquired by the Smithsonian Institution, where a fire on January 15, 1865, unfortunately destroyed most of it. However, copies of most of the portraits, including this one, existed. These copies were reproduced in color lithographs in McKenney and Hall's *History of the Indian Tribes of North America*. Although it was far from accurate in many respects, this work, published in separate volumes in Philadelphia from 1836 to 1844, was one of the first serious studies of the American Indian.

The Indians in King's portrait are realistically portrayed and carefully dressed in their tribal headdresses, necklaces, and earrings. They appear so close to the front of the picture that we almost feel we could reach out and touch them. Their strongly modeled faces impress us with their grave dignity and calm nobility.

George Caleb Bingham was a 19th-century American painter who rarely painted Indians, even though he lived in the West. Bingham was a Missouri artist who preferred to portray the everyday life of the Missouri settlers. He was especially interested in the trappers, traders, and flatboatmen to whom the wide Missouri River was a highway to civilization and the markets of the East.

In 1845, however, Bingham painted one of the only two Indian pictures known to have been done by him. *The Concealed Enemy* shows a single Indian crouched behind the cover of a large tree stump jutting from an outcropping of rock. It suggests a dramatic tension that is unusual in Bingham's work. The nearly nude Osage brave is powerful, muscular, and wary. He is silhouetted against a mass of rock by a dramatic back light, which gives the scene a theatrical quality. The kneeling Indian, the jagged hills, the twisted branches of dead trees, all heighten the suggestion of impending doom and of the danger and excitement to be found on the western frontier.

The Concealed Enemy (1845) by George Caleb Bingham (1811-1879); Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

Bull Bear (1837) by Alfred Jacob Miller (1810-1874); Walters Art Gallery, Baltimore, Maryland.

Alfred Jacob Miller, like Karl Bodmer, went west as illustrator for an exploring expedition. He was a Baltimore painter who had studied art in Philadelphia and had also spent some time in Europe, traveling and copying the works of great artists in museums there. When Miller returned to America in 1834, he met Captain William Drummond Stewart, a Scottish nobleman and hero of the Napoleonic wars. Stewart, like the Prince of Wied-Neuwied, had a taste for adventure, and had been as far west as the Rocky Mountains several times before. Stewart was eager to return there with an artist whose sketches would be souvenirs of his travels in the West.

Miller's paintings of his trip with Stewart concentrate mostly on the unexplored landscape through which they passed, but a few of his paintings are portraits of Indians. One of them is of *Bull Bear*, chief of the Oglala Sioux. The half-length formal portrait shows the chief seated with folded hands, clasping a tomahawk and wearing an elaborate hair-fringed garment and a necklace of bear claws. Though Miller's technique is sketchier and more impressionistic than Bodmer's, still it makes us feel the pride and fierce courage of this Oglala chief.

Lacrosse Playing Among the Sioux (1857) by Seth Eastman (1808-1875); The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Seth Eastman painted many Indian pictures. Painting was a hobby for Eastman, however, for he was primarily a soldier, educated at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point. During the 1840s, he was commandant of the frontier outpost of Fort Snelling in the Minnesota Territory. His experiences there among the Indians provided the inspiration for the paintings he did then and later in his life. Eastman's wife, Mary, accompanied him to Fort Snelling and while there wrote a number of books describing Indian life (as she saw it) and recording ancient Indian legends. Her books, especially *Dahcotah, or Life and Legends of the Sioux*, became very popular. The appeal of her books was no doubt increased by the many illustrations her husband did for them.

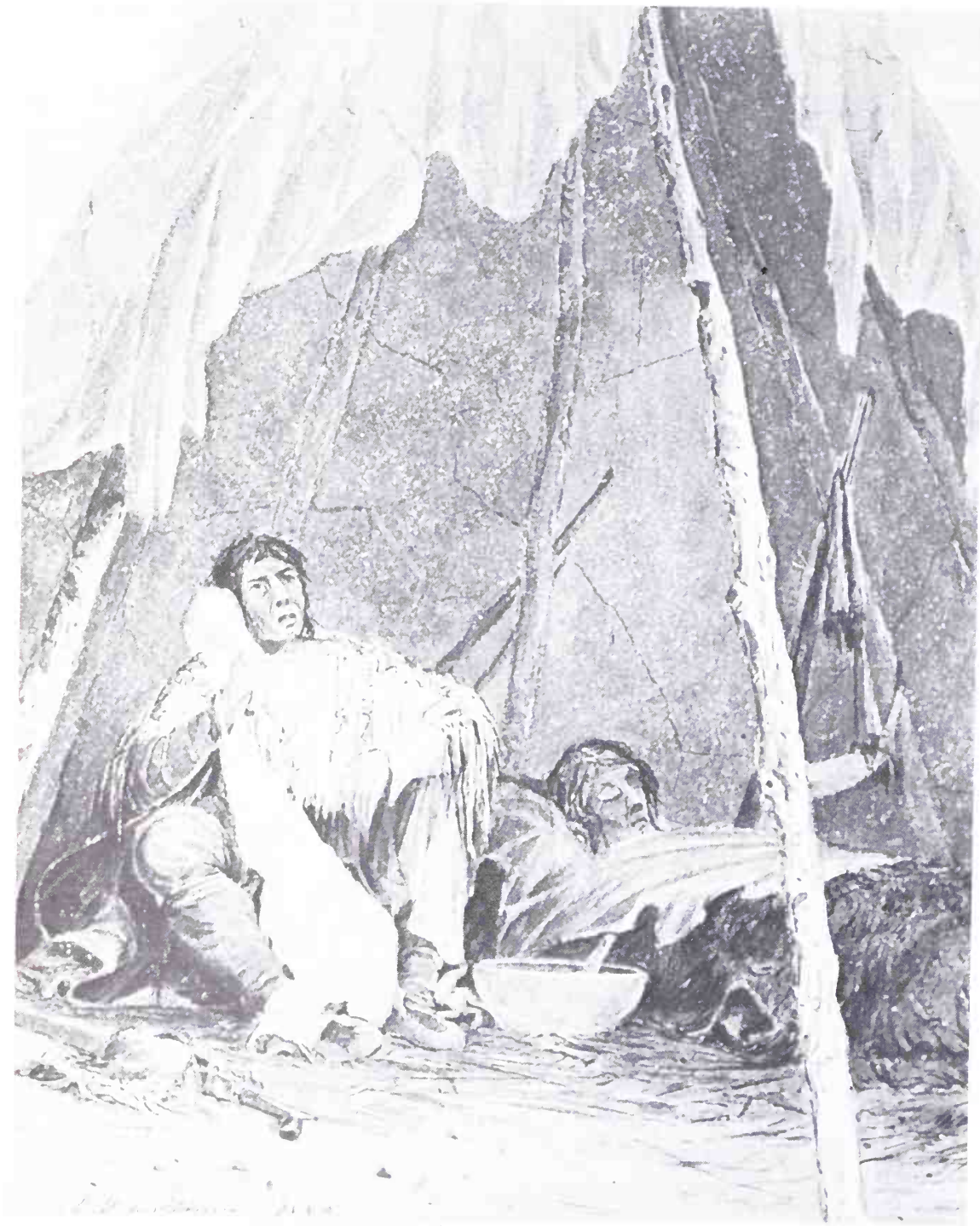
Some of the pictures Seth Eastman made of the Indians were done first in quick water-color sketches painted on the spot. Later on, when the Eastmans had settled in Washington, many of these sketches were redone in large and careful oil paintings. Some of these oils hang today in the Capitol in Washington, D.C. Eastman was later assigned to illustrate Henry Rowe Schoolcraft's many-volumed *History of the Indian Tribes of the United States*, commissioned by a special act of Congress in 1851.

One of the best known of Eastman's paintings is *Lacrosse Playing Among the Sioux*. The game, played with long-handled, looped sticks and a ball, is a lively and spirited one involving a great number of eager players. The introduction of deep horizons and purple mountains in the distance creates a romantic atmosphere and emphasizes the high adventure of life among the Indians of the western plains.

Indian life in a more solemn moment is illustrated in Seth Eastman's *Indian Council*, a subject the artist painted several times. This version is one of the group of Eastman paintings now hanging in the United States Capitol. The council was an occasion of importance and attracted the attention of many writers, painters, and observers of Indian life.

Eastman's painting, based on earlier pencil and watercolor sketches, shows a tall and dignified Indian chief dressed in ceremonial robes and feathered war bonnet. He addresses his people in what, one feels, must be calm and measured words. His listeners pose in front of a bark summer house with a tepee behind it and listen with solemn attention to the words of their leader. (Oratory, the art of speaking effectively, was much admired by the Indians.) The picture is formal and dignified in keeping with the subject itself.

Indian Council (1868) by Seth Eastman (1808-1875); Architect of the United States Capitol.



Medicine Man and Patient (1850) by Seth Eastman (1808-1875); J. J. Hill Library, St. Paul.

Medicine Man and Patient is one of the watercolors Eastman sketched while stationed at Fort Snelling. Inside the wigwam, covered with warm skins, lies a patient critically ill. The medicine man shakes a gourd rattle and chants a set pattern of words that was part of the ritual known only to medicine men. Membership in the Medicine Society was considered a high honor. Medicine men often had a thorough and practical knowledge of real medicine. In many tribes women as well as men were initiated into the society. They could set broken bones, heal wounds, and treat many diseases. Medicine men were familiar with the healing properties of many herbs and plants and knew how to prepare them so that they had genuine medicinal value. However, the strong faith patients had in the healing power of medicine men also helped cure their illnesses.

A small watercolor by Seth Eastman shows an Indian method of travel. Some Indian tribes were semi-nomadic; that is, they would travel from place to place as the seasons changed, seeking the best hunting grounds. An entire village would pack up and set out to follow the buffalo herds that roamed the plains.

As we can see in *Indians Traveling*, the men and small children would ride on horses while the squaws, often with large packs on their backs, would trudge behind. The travois, a kind of dry-land sled harnessed to a horse, was often used to carry goods. It was made of the long poles that also formed the frame of the Indian tent or lodge. The ends of these poles dragged along on the ground, but a horizontal brace, just behind the horse, kept them rigid. On top of the sled were placed the rolled-up skins that were the walls of the Indian lodge, and on top of these were piled all the rest of the household goods. Sometimes a traveling band of Indians would stretch out for several miles along the grassy plains of the Midwest.

The sight of such an Indian procession grew more and more common as the 19th century wore on. Pushed westward by the migration of the white man, the Indian was hardly settled in new hunting grounds—or had barely begun to reap new cornfields—before the relentless tide of white civilization forced him again to pack his tents and wander on.

Indians Traveling (1850) by Seth Eastman (1808-1875); J. J. Hill Library, St. Paul.

Indian Burial (about 1848) by Seth Eastman (1808-1875); Peabody Museum, Harvard University.

In a pencil sketch that was later translated into a finished oil painting, Eastman described an *Indian Burial*. Several Indian tribes did not bury their dead, but wrapped them tightly in fresh buffalo skins and placed them on top of a scaffold just outside of the village. These scaffolds were constructed of four upright posts which supported a platform made of willow rods. They were just high enough to be above the reach of human hands and out of the way of wolves and dogs. The body would be laid to rest on its back with its feet carefully pointed toward the rising sun. Underneath the platform the relatives of the deceased would chant in grief, sometimes inflicting some wound on themselves to appease the spirit of the dead. Eastman's pencil sketch shows the moment when the wrapped-up body of the deceased is about to be lifted onto the platform. The pencil drawing was intended to serve only as a visual note for a more finished painting that was based on it. Nevertheless, a drawing such as this has a feeling of spontaneity, of a fresh and vivid experience, that is not found in the more formal and polished oil paintings.

George Catlin is the best known of all the American painters of the Indian. He spent most of his life traveling among the Indians of the West and portraying their villages, their customs, their buffalo and deer hunts, and, of course, the Indians themselves. His purpose, as he himself observed in a book he wrote about them, was to establish an "Indian Gallery" in order, he said, "to snatch from oblivion a truly lofty and noble race." In 1830, therefore, Catlin packed his paints and brushes and, leaving the comforts of Philadelphia behind, set out for the West. He became an enthusiastic and tireless recorder of Indian life, many details of which are known to us today only through Catlin's paintings. His "Indian Gallery" became his life work and although it failed to provide him with a fortune, it earned him a place in the history of the Indians and of the West.

Catlin painted several sketches of the Indians engaged in hunting buffalo. The *Buffalo Chase* was painted in 1832 in Catlin's characteristic rapid brush stroke and thin oil wash. The quickness of the sketch seems to echo the quickly shifting scene as the frightened buffalo stampede across the picture plane and the Indians gallop after them. Even the sharp slope of the hill in the background heightens the suggestion of speed and rapidly shifting movement.

Buffalo Chase (1832) by George Catlin (1796-1872): The American Museum of Natural History, New York.

The Plains Indians were famous for being extremely skillful horsemen. The Indians' horses were so well trained that they were ridden without reins. Catlin himself described the Indians' method of hunting buffalo: "When pursuing a large herd the Indian generally rides close in the rear until he selects the animal he wishes to kill, which he separates from the throng as soon as he can by dashing his horse between it and the herd and forcing it off by itself, where he can approach it without the danger of being trampled to death. . . ." The buffalo, wrote Catlin, "struggle in vain to evade [the Indian's] deadly shafts when he dashes amongst them over the plains on his wild horse."

The same thin oil wash and rapid brush stroke are used in *Sioux Indians Pursuing a Stag*. Catlin had to work rapidly when he was among the Indians, sketching his pictures on the spot with little time to perfect them or record fine details. He developed, therefore, a kind of pictorial shorthand, which has been described by one Catlin expert as his "impressionistic field-sketching style." This style, because it is rapid and spontaneous, gives his paintings a freshness and sparkle that many more carefully painted pictures lack.

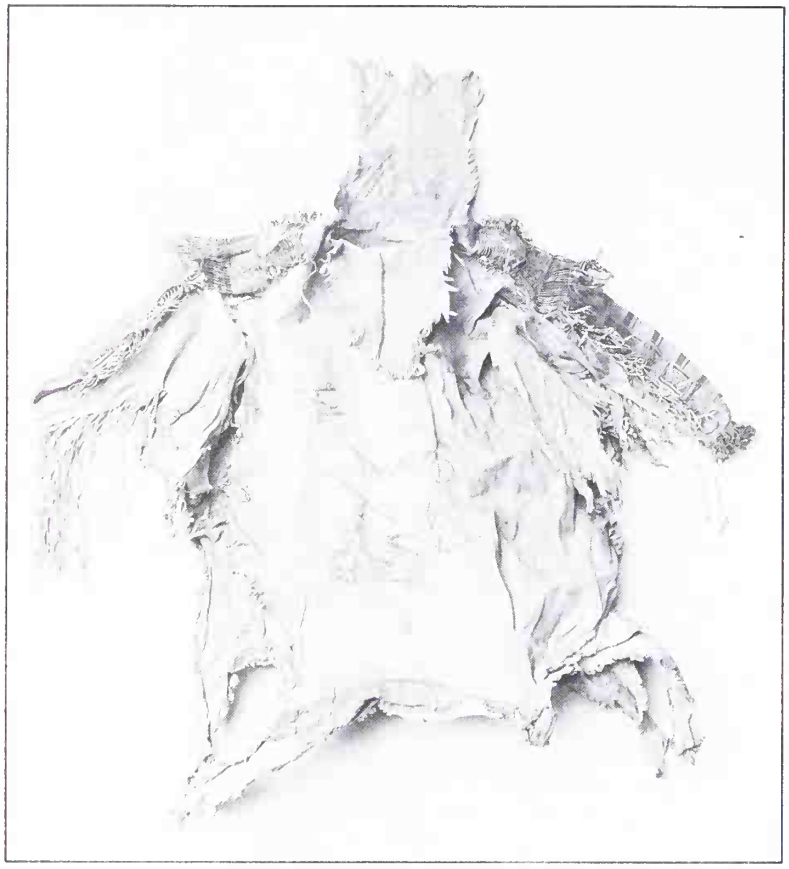
The Sioux pursue their quarry in light and maneuverable birchbark canoes on the St. Peter (later the Minnesota) River in Minnesota Territory. All that can be seen of the fleeing stag are part of his head and his magnificent antlers rising above the water of the river. We feel that the stag, fleet and proud animal though he may be, is nevertheless doomed by the superior ability of the Indian hunters.

Sioux Indians Pursuing a Stag (1830) by George Catlin (1796-1872); National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

Arikara Village (1832) by George Catlin (1796-1872); National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

George Catlin's busy brush recorded even the appearance of the Indian villages he saw on his travels, as in *Arikara Village*. Painted in 1832 from the deck of the steamer that was taking the artist up the Missouri River, it suggests open space and vast distances. The artist achieved this impression by using a sweeping brush stroke and transparent wash that suggests form and color rather than defining it. The village itself appears on the far side of the river, a tiny cluster of simple huts.

Catlin described the Arikara Village as "beautifully situated on the west bank of the river . . . [it consists] of 150 earth-covered lodges, which are in part surrounded by an imperfect and open barrier of pickets set firmly in the ground, and of ten or twelve feet in height. . . . This village is built upon an open prairie, and the gracefully undulating hills that rise in the distance behind it are everywhere covered with a verdant green turf, without a tree or a bush anywhere to be seen."



Shirt worn by Four Bears, 19th-century Mandan chief; Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

In addition to sketching scenes of Indian life, Catlin painted a number of portraits of Indian leaders, such as the portrait of Black Hawk shown earlier.

Another Catlin portrait is that of Four Bears, a Mandan chief with whom Catlin became particularly friendly. It was painted in 1832, when Catlin visited the Mandan Indians on the Upper Missouri, territory that is today part of North Dakota. Catlin painted not only the proud leaders of the Mandans but also the Indians' villages, their sports and games, and even their sacred initiation ceremonies. It was only five years later that the tribe was all but destroyed by smallpox.

The full-length portrait of Four Bears shows the Indian chief magnificently dressed in his horned and feathered war bonnet. He also wears a shirt decorated with porcupine quills, fringed leggings, and beaded moccasins. The chief's pose is regal. His profile is turned toward us, and he holds at arm's length his beautifully decorated ceremonial spear. Catlin very much admired Four Bears, whom he called "the most extraordinary man."

The porcupine quill shirt that Four Bears wears in the Catlin portrait was acquired by the artist for his Indian collection. Today the shirt is in the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. It is interesting to compare the real shirt with the one in the portrait in order to see what changes the artist made in reproducing it. For one thing, Catlin exaggerated the length of the shirt, making it a long robe so that its wearer would seem taller and more dignified. The size of the quilted rosette was also increased to emphasize its

importance and make it suggest a sort of Indian medal of honor. The silhouette of a human hand, on the shirt, meant to show that Four Bears had killed an enemy in hand-to-hand combat. Catlin isolated the symbol in order to emphasize it. The pictorial record of enemies the chief had overcome was also played down in the portrait. Catlin did not attempt to indicate the finely wrought pattern of woven quillwork on the arm and shoulder bands. All of the changes the artist made in the shirt were designed to lend importance and dignity to the noble chief who wore it.

Four Bears (1832) by George Catlin (1796-1872); National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

The Last of the Buffalo (about 1889) by Albert Bierstadt (1830-1902); The Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

One of the most popular paintings of Indians and the West in the 19th century was Albert Bierstadt's *The Last of the Buffalo*. Bierstadt was the son of German immigrants who came to America when he was a small child. When he grew up, however, Bierstadt went back to Germany to study painting at the Dusseldorf Academy, which was considered one of the finest art schools in the world. When he returned to America in the late 1850s Bierstadt joined an expedition sent to map an overland wagon route to the Pacific. The large canvases he later painted from sketches made on this expedition brought him fame and fortune.

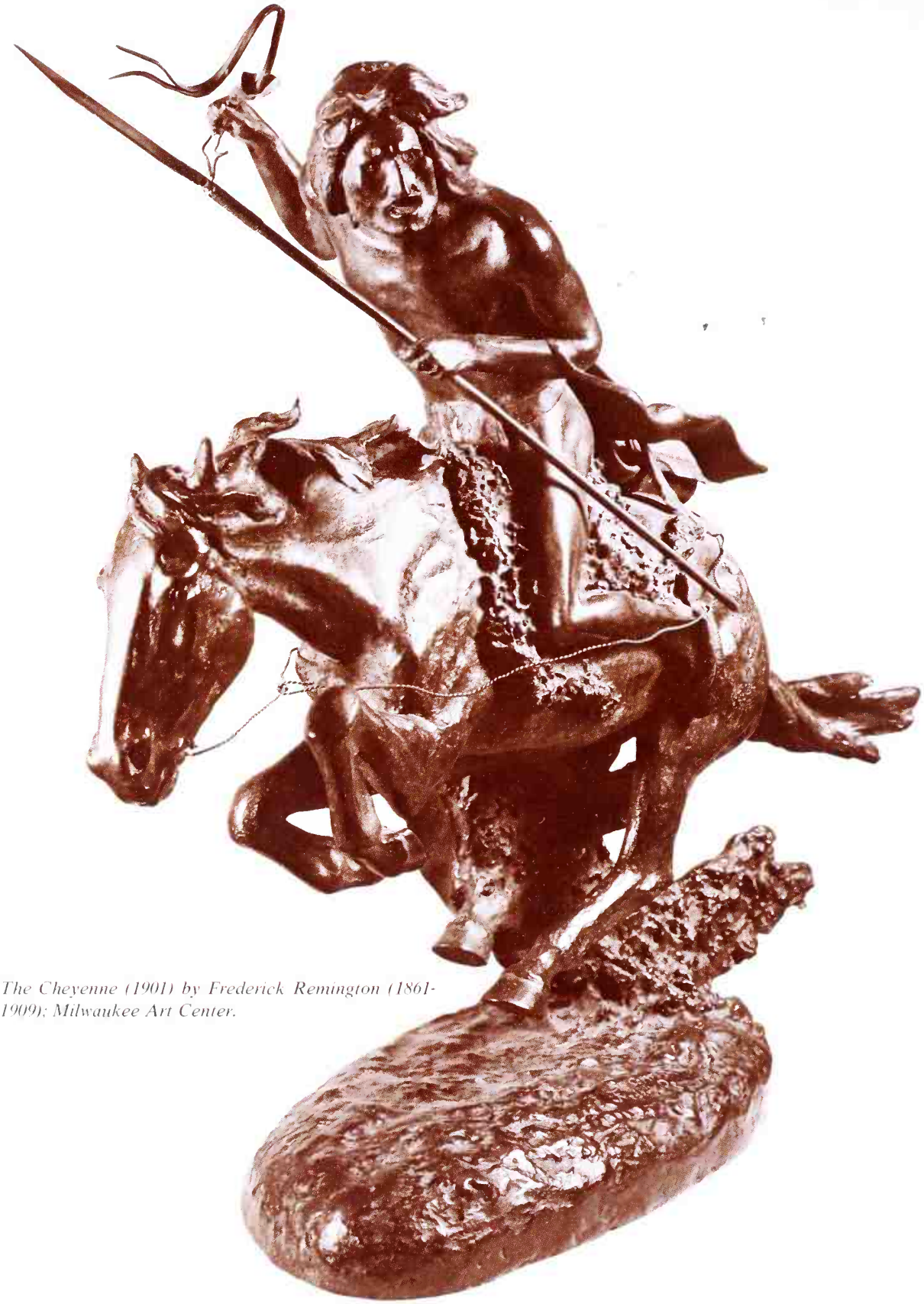
The Last of the Buffalo is typical of Bierstadt's western paintings. In it we see a deep landscape with glowing lights and shadows. A mounted Indian thrusts his spear at a charging buffalo while a lone bull, at the left, stands at bay. There are strong diagonal lines in the composition—the thrust of the spear, the rearing white horse, the lighted area in the foreground. These diagonals create tension in the painting and heighten its dramatic impact. The skulls and bones of long-dead buffalo are strewn over the foreground. Perhaps they are intended to remind us not only of the last of the buffalo but of the last of the Indians as well.

Although an easterner by birth and training, throughout his life Frederick Remington admired the West and the people who lived there.

Most of Remington's pictures were devoted to cowboys and soldiers and the rowdy activity of their camps, but the artist also portrayed the Indians and their way of life. His paintings are usually spirited and lively, not only in their subject matter but also in the way the artist's brush strokes seem to dash rapidly over the surface of the canvas.

The Story of Where the Sun Goes, however, has a rather quiet, thoughtful mood. An old brave and three children sit beside a campfire at night while the old man tells his young listeners one of the many ancient Indian legends. The flickering light of an unseen fire illuminates their faces; all else is cast in deep shadow. Man and nature seem at peace in this nostalgic view of what must have been a frequent scene in Indian life.

The Story of Where the Sun Goes (1907) by Frederick Remington (1861-1909); collection of Mr. L. R. French, Odessa, Texas.



The Cheyenne (1901) by Frederick Remington (1861-1909); Milwaukee Art Center.

Remington was a well-known sculptor as well as a painter. Most of his sculpture was cast in bronze through the lost wax process, an ancient technique known to many cultures. The artist models a figure out of wax or out of a clay core covered with wax. The model is then packed in clay and baked. The wax melts and runs out (is "lost") through little tubes provided for that purpose. Bronze, melted at high temperatures, is poured into the mold and then allowed to cool and harden. The cast bronze, removed from its mold, forms the finished sculpture.

The Cheyenne is typical of Remington's bronzes, which have the same dash and liveliness as his paintings. The mounted Indian, holding a war shield and a buffalo lance, gallops in search of his enemy. We are made to feel his speed, his courage, and his power. The Cheyennes were originally an agricultural people who lived in the area that is present-day Minnesota. In the 17th century, however, they were pushed gradually westward by the Sioux, who settled in Minnesota and the Dakotas. The Cheyennes became famous horsemen and noted warriors—indeed, greatly feared among their enemies.

Another Remington painting, *The Trail of the Shod Horse*, shows yet another aspect of Indian life. Indians were skilled trackers, trained to read the smallest clues left by men or other animals. In this painting, a band of Indians has come across the tracks of a lone horseman. Is he a friend or an enemy? The Indians know he is a white man, for only white men's horses were shod. The wind is from the right, as we can see, carrying with it the scent of the shod horse. Horse and rider cannot be far away or the tracks would have been filled in by the blowing snow.

The artist creates a feeling of drama and excitement in this painting not only by the obvious tension which results from the sight of the horseman's tracks, but also by the sharp contrasts of light and shadow and by the strong diagonal lines of the composition. The column of Indians rides into the picture from the upper right toward the lower left. Their advance is arrested by the counter-movement of the tracks. These diagonal tracks create another line for our eyes to follow. It is emphasized by the parallel direction of the shadows on the snow, the direction of the leader's gun, the distant line of the hill, and even the wind blown scrub at the lower right. The strong, conflicting lines of the composition emphasize the tension suggested by the artist's subject.

The Trail of the Shod Horse (1907) by Frederick Remington (1861-1909). P. A. Rollins Collection, Princeton University Library.

Indian Pipe Dance (1875) by Ralph Albert Blakelock (1847-1919); The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York; gift of George A. Hearn, 1909.

In a gentler mood than the dramatic compositions of Remington are the paintings of Ralph Albert Blakelock. Blakelock too had traveled west in search of the unspoiled frontier landscape and the Indians who inhabited it. He recalled his experiences in paintings that are intensely personal. They make us feel we are looking at the private vision of the artist rather than a dramatic spectacle put on for public view. Blakelock's paintings did not find a ready market. His health broke down and he died in an asylum, an unrecognized and bitter man. Today, however, his paintings are valued for their quiet poetry and their faint suggestion of a half-forgotten dream.

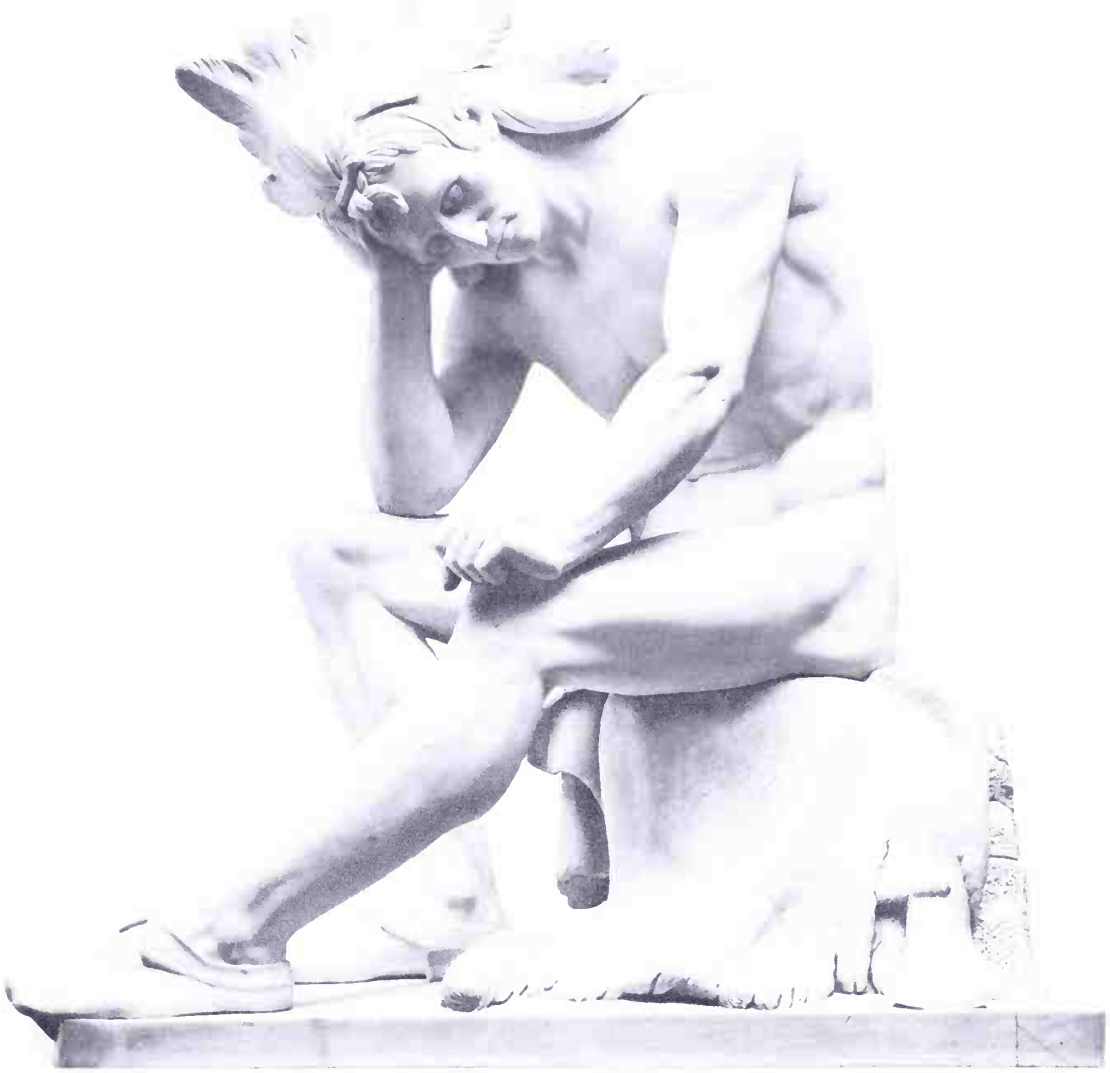
Indian Pipe Dance reveals this thoughtful mood. It is a romantic painting in which the Indian is seen poetically as a natural part of the mysterious woodland scene. The rich texture of the paint itself contributes to the romantic mood, for the heavy paint seems to prevent the forms from becoming sharply defined. The Indian dancers are one with nature, at home among the trees that are silhouetted against the clouds and darkening sky.

Charles Marion Russell also painted cowboys and the Indians of the West. Brought up in St. Louis, Russell went west as a boy of 16 and became a Montana cowboy. He had only a little instruction in drawing and never attended a professional art school. But Russell taught himself to paint by drawing and sketching whenever he could—out-of-doors with the cattlemen, and even at night, beside their campfires. Cowboys, Indians, horses, cattle, the landscape of the West—all of these became subjects for his brush. Painting absorbed more and more of his time and his reputation as an artist grew, until eventually he established a studio in Great Falls, Montana.

In the Wake of the Buffalo Runners is one of Russell's paintings. A group of Indians rests for a moment on the rise of a hill. The light of the late afternoon sun bathes them in a warm glow. The light creates a mood of nostalgia, and suggests not only the end of a day, but the end of an old way of life.

The lone Indian portrayed as the sole survivor of a doomed and dying race was a theme that fascinated the romantic imagination of the 19th-century white man. Thomas Crawford's *The Indian: The Dying Chief Contemplating the Progress of Civilization* is a statue which illustrates this popular, nostalgic theme.

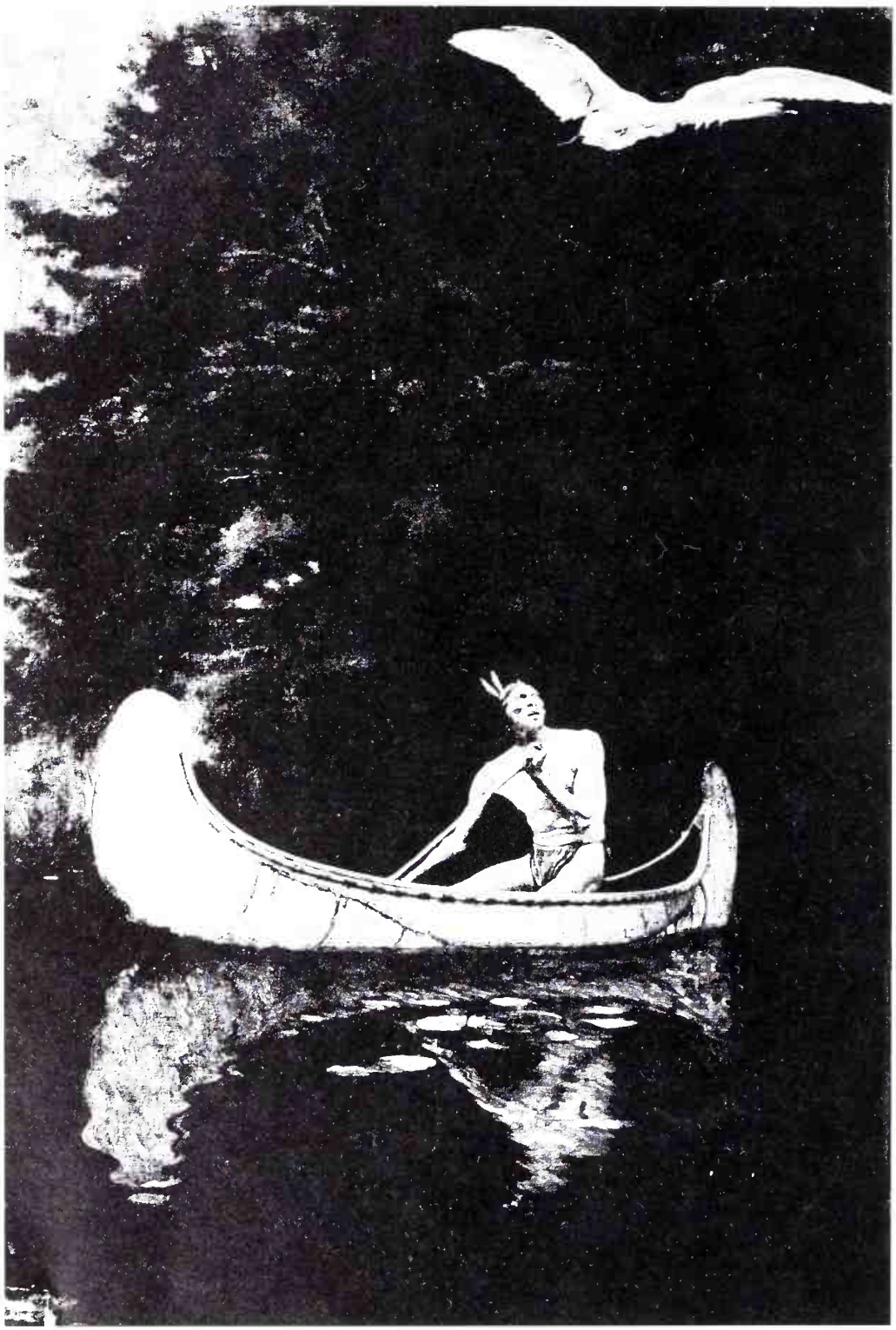
In the Wake of the Buffalo Runners (1911) by Charles Marion Russell (1864-1926); collection of Mr. and Mrs. Russell H. Bennett, Minneapolis, Minnesota.



The Indian: The Dying Chief Contemplating the Progress of Civilization (1856) by Thomas Crawford (1813-1857); The New York Historical Society.

Wearing a drooping feathered headdress, the Indian is seated on a low mound with his head resting wearily on his hand. His attitude is one of sad but dignified resignation to the fate of his vanishing tribe. The figure was originally created to be part of a group decorating the pediment of the United States Senate. The statue shown here is a copy—made by the artist himself—of the one on the Senate building.

The Indian is made of marble, a translucent hard stone favored by sculptors because it can be worked to a smooth and polished finish. In stone sculpture an artist chips a figure out of a block of stone, taking away solid material as the work progresses. This is the opposite of what is done in clay sculpture or cast bronze, which involves adding soft modeling material to the figure until it assumes the desired form.



The Silence Broken (about 1885) by George de Forest Brush (1855-1941); from Portrait of the Old West *by Harold McCracken.*

George de Forest Brush was an eastern-born artist who had a deep and personal interest in the problems of the Indians. He studied art in Paris, and then, returning to the United States in the 1880s, spent several years traveling and sketching among the Indians of the Northern Plains. The artist was critical of the destruction white civilization had wreaked on the Indians, and he found inspiration for his painting in their vanishing way of life. He was so eager to know all he could about Indian culture that he learned to build tepees, make bows and arrows, and sew moccasins. He studied Indian folklore and even participated in some of the Indians' traditional dances.

Brush's sympathetic attitude toward the life of the red man was expressed in a number of paintings the artist based on his experiences among the Indians. *The Silence Broken*, for example, illustrates the complete harmony of man with nature that was typical of Indian life. The Indian in the birchbark canoe rests for a moment on the still waters of the stream. The sense of peace, of the quiet solitude of the wilderness, is broken only by the whoosh of wings as a white swan flies overhead. The direction of the bird and that of the canoe echo one another in a pictorial way, establishing a visual communication between man and bird. Both provide a bright contrast to the deep waters of the stream and the dark foliage behind them. Both are equally at home in the undisturbed harmony of nature.

Modern Indian Art

In the 20th century, American Indian artists began in their work to look at themselves and their people as human beings rather than as symbols. However, the paintings of these artists strongly reveal the influence of old traditions—happily combining the old with the new.

One of the descendants of the Plains Indians is the contemporary artist Oscar Howe. Howe, a South Dakota Sioux, combines a modern feeling for abstract design with the two-dimensional linear style of the buffalo robe painters of an earlier time. Working in flat color areas surrounded by outline, Howe usually depicts hunters and warriors, and occasionally dancers or camp scenes as well.

In *Sioux Warriors*, the artist paints a number of figures galloping over the surface of the composition. Like the Indian mural painters of ancient times, Howe gives us no ground line to indicate depth or perspective, nor does he make any attempt to model the figures and suggest their round, three-dimensional reality. Yet the composition is rich and varied and communicates a sense of ease and spontaneity that is characteristic of Howe's work. No two horses are alike, nor are their war-bonneted riders. Although some of the horses appear to have depth, the artist clearly prefers the flat, color-filled outline technique of the ancient buffalo hide painters. Even so, there is color, movement, and excitement in this representation of a Plains Indians' war party.

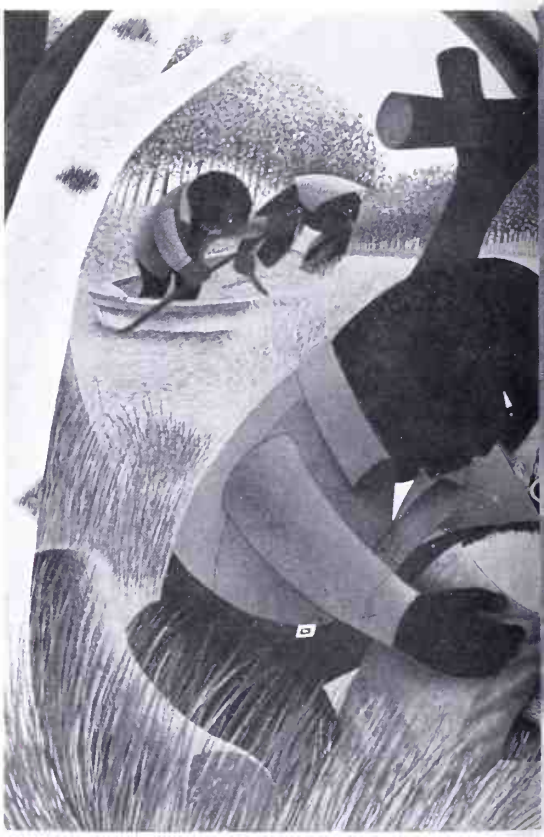
Sioux Warriors (about 1936) by Oscar Howe (1915-); collection of Dorothy Dunn; from American Indian Painting *by Dorothy Dunn, University of New Mexico Press.*

Hopi Corn Dance (1925) by Fred Kabotie (1900-); The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; gift of Miss Ima Hogg.

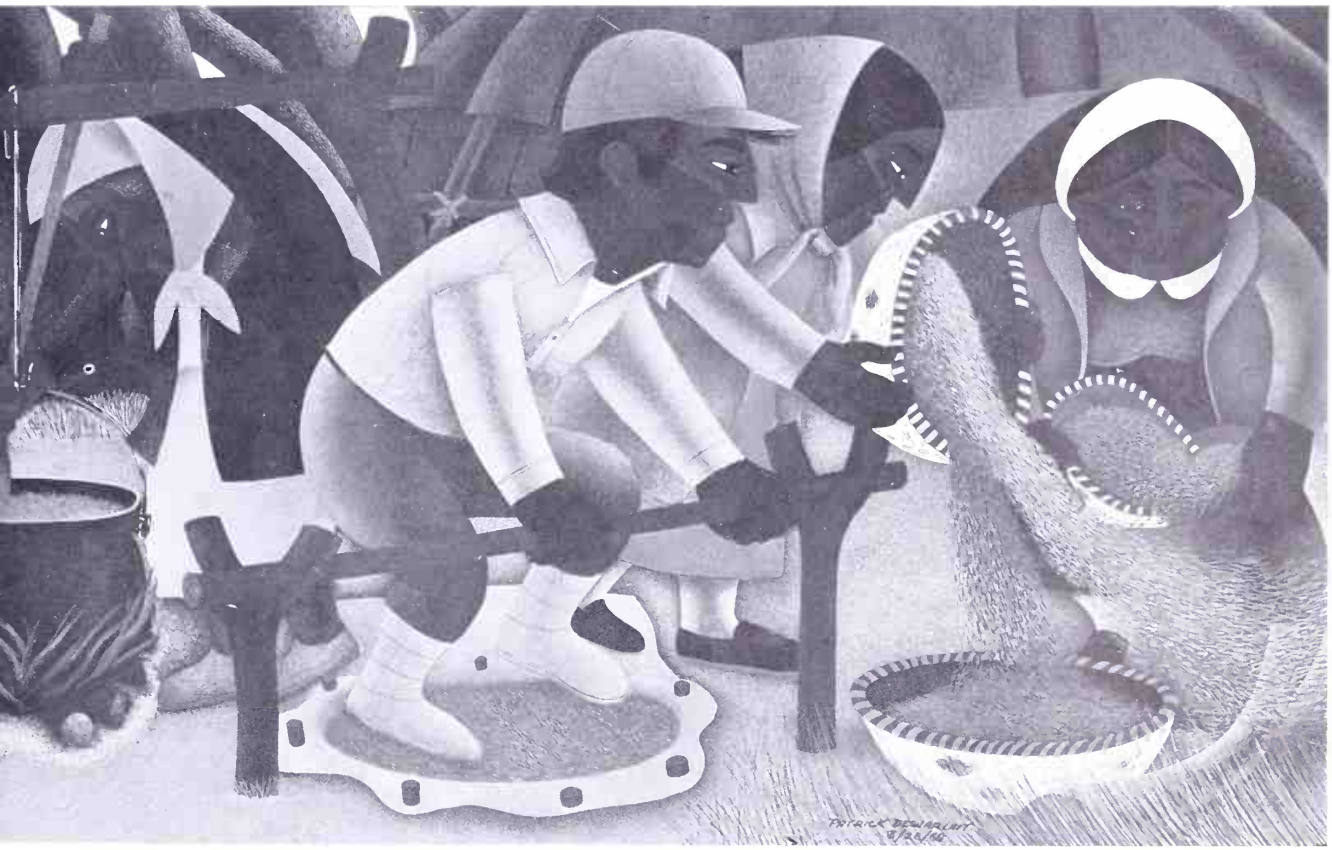
Fred Kabotie, a Hopi Indian of the Southwest, is also a contemporary painter of considerable merit. The ancient ceremonials and dances of his people are the most frequent subject of his skillful brush. Some of the Hopi tribal dances involved Kachina dancers, men who were masked and costumed to represent the Kachinas, impersonators of the Hopi gods and spirits. The religious and symbolic quality of the Kachina dancers is vividly suggested in Kabotie's *Hopi Corn Dance*. This painting is much more three-dimensional than traditional Indian painting, for the artist was concerned with perspective and correct anatomy. Nevertheless, it still retains the formal rhythms and intricate designs of traditional Indian paintings. It reproduces in rich color the elaborate costumes and masks of the Kachina dancers. It portrays equally well the intricate steps and dance patterns of the ancient Hopi ceremonies. True to the traditional ideas of Indian painting, it makes no attempt to reproduce a landscape setting but concentrates instead on the figures themselves and on their symbolic and religious activities.

Patrick Des Jarlait is a self-taught Indian artist who grew up on the Red Lake Reservation in northern Minnesota. Among the artist's favorite subjects for painting are the seasonal occupations of his people, the Chippewa. In *Wild Rice Harvest* Des Jarlait presents a pictorial story of the different steps in the harvesting and preparation of wild rice for market. The story starts at the left of the painting and continues to the right through a series of episodes. The artist's careful composition makes each activity seem to flow naturally into the next. We "read" the story in the picture just as clearly as we would if it were written.

Des Jarlait works in watercolor. He begins with a base of rather flat patterns of shapes and colors, then gradually builds up, shades, and models his forms to suggest three-dimensional objects. People, boats, huts, trees, and even the thick underbrush of the wild rice swamp are presented reduced to their simplest forms in geometric shapes. But the objects have depth and solidity. In fact, the feeling for three-dimensional structure is one of the characteristics of this artist's work. His paintings are quite different from those of most of the Southwest Indian artists, who use flatter and broader color areas. However, Patrick Des Jarlait's paintings are similar in some ways. They are equally colorful and decorative and do present vivid accounts of Indian life today.



Wild Rice Harvest (1969) by Patrick Des Jarlait (1921-); Courtesy, General Mills Art Collection



The Buffalo Hunt (about 1935) by Stephen Mopope (1898-); Museum of Northern Arizona.

The Buffalo Hunt by Stephen Mopope, a Kiowa Indian, was painted in the 1930s, but it represents a scene from Indian history. In its emphasis on flat decoration, however, the painting is different from the 19th-century white artists' representations of the same subject. For example, neither the figures of the Indians nor of the animals they ride or hunt are modeled, in terms of light and shade. Moreover, Mopope draws the scene as if it is viewed from its center—another artistic device for emphasizing the flatness of a design. However, space and depth are suggested by the rounded shapes of the animals at the right and left and by the pale dust clouds raised by the animals' stamping hooves. By combining decorative techniques with realistic ones, Stephen Mopope in *The Buffalo Hunt* seems to bridge two traditions of art. The painting clearly shows the influence of the flat and formalized traditional art of the Plains Indians, and also, through its rounded figures and suggestion of deep space, that of the white artists who went west to paint the frontier and the native red men.

WITHDRAWN
No lon[illegible]ty of the
Boston Public Library.
Sale of this material benefits the Library.

the author

Rena Neumann Coen is an assistant professor of art history at St. Cloud State College in St. Cloud, Minnesota. She has been a research assistant at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts, and her articles on art history have appeared in several art publications. She is the author of *Kings and Queens in Art, American History in Art, The Black Man in Art, The Old Testament in Art,* and *Medicine in Art.*

Mrs. Coen is a native of New York City. She earned her B.A. degree at Barnard College, her M.A. at Yale University, and her Ph.D. at the University of Minnesota. She is the wife of Professor Edward Coen of the Department of Economics at the University of Minnesota. The Coens and their three children live in Minneapolis.

redmaninart00coen
redmaninart00coen
redmaninart00coen

F
N8317
.15C63
1972

EASTERN MASSACHUSETTS
REGIONAL LIBRARY SYSTEM

BOSTON PUBLIC LIBRARY

The Date Due Card in the pocket indicates the date on or before which this book should be returned to the Library.

Please do not remove cards from this pocket.

Buffalo Hunt (about 1935) by Stephen Mopope (1898-); Museum of Northern Arizona.

Front Cover:
Four Bears (1832) by George Catlin (1796-1872); National Collection of Fine Arts, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

MUSCLE BOUND FOR LONG WEAR
0171-6